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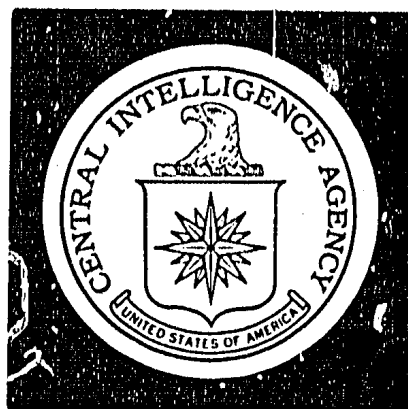


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DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

Intelligence Memorandum

HAITI: DUVALIERISM FOREVER?

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3 February 1971
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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Directorate of Intelligence
3 February 1971

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

HAITI: Duvalierism Forever?Summary

President-for-Life Francois Duvalier has designated his 22-year-old son Jean-Claude to succeed him as Haiti's next President-for-Life. Duvalier's decision has not been challenged, nor is it expected to be during his lifetime. Jean-Claude's prospects as president are contingent on several unknowns. If his father remains in office long enough to build a firm foundation for his son's presidency and if Jean-Claude proves an apt pupil of Duvalierism, he may last a while. But how long he could hold the presidency deprived of parental protection will depend on his political skill and the strength of his potential rivals for power.

When a challenge is offered, it is expected to come from within the establishment. Although Duvalier's manipulations have prevented any one of the potential presidential aspirants from gaining advantage over any other, his death will free them to pursue their ambitions. If Jean-Claude succeeds his father, as planned, or if the contest for power is confined to a few rivals from the establishment and is brief, the new government will probably closely resemble the old. Widespread chaos and an attendant power vacuum after Duvalier's death is not anticipated, but should the country find itself leaderless, every faction in Haiti and the exiles abroad would try to exploit the situation to their advantage.

Note: This memorandum was prepared by the Office of Current Intelligence and coordinated within CIA.

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What Has Gone Before

1. Now, as throughout most of its history, Haiti is ruled by a dictator. The incumbent is 63-year old Francois Duvalier, President-for-Life, whose "Duvalierist Revolution" has been in force since September 1957. Duvalier is as obsessed with race and as indifferent to the needs of the people as any of his predecessors. He is vicious in defense of his position. Although he continually refers to his government as the "Duvalierist Revolution," its methods and character closely resemble those of preceding dictatorships. Its achievements so far consist of consolidating a brutal and absolute tyranny, worsening the lot of the majority, and demeaning the nation's reputation.

2. Devoting his formidable genius to making his own position impregnable, Duvalier shattered Haitian institutions and reconstructed them as a mechanism geared solely to maintain himself in power. He sacrificed the economy of the country to his ambitions, put police power into the hands of the worst elements of Haitian society, and ruthlessly eliminated all sources of dissent. His brilliant manipulation of the military enabled him simultaneously to create a force to protect himself against attack and to retain control of the men who have the guns. He replaced the mulatto elite, once a politically and economically significant minority, with a new elite. Most of the mulattos now occupy the status of "unpersons." Membership in the new elite demands total subservience to the will of Duvalier and, in general, black rather than mulatto identity. Political parties and visible political opposition do not exist.

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Foreign aid funds, principally US, were diverted from the projects for which they were granted and used instead to reinforce and fortify the power of Duvalier and his loyalists at the expense of the Haitian people.

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Recent Developments

3. The steep economic decline from 1963 to 1968 resulted in part from hurricanes and droughts, but also from the curtailment in 1963 of foreign investment and a decline in the tourist trade that occurred when the vicious character of the regime became obvious. The economic decline began to level off in 1968, and in 1969, revival of tourism, expanding bauxite exports, and increased public spending resulted in an estimated two-percent rise in the gross domestic product, which at least approximated population growth for the period. By early 1970, the Haitian financial position had improved enough to induce the International Monetary Fund to reinstate a \$2.2-million credit. If the upswing continues and no natural disasters occur, export earnings may approximate the 1963 level by 1971-72. Even moderate economic progress over the long term will be very difficult, however, because of the Duvalier government's self-serving policies and the absence of institutions necessary for economic growth. At present, Haitian economic recovery more nearly resembles a multiple amputee's laborious and partial accommodation to fearful disabilities than the growth of a normal organism.

4. Some see signs of a softening of the regime. A number of persons jailed in connection with the Coast Guard revolt in April 1969 have been released, and long-standing Duvalier loyalist Clovis Desinor was not jailed or otherwise molested after his dismissal in October 1970 as Secretary of State for Finance. These actions may instead indicate, however, that Duvalier's control is absolute.

5. Perhaps impelled by age, chronic illness, and suspicion that some of his colleagues were conspiring for the presidency, Duvalier finally overcame his antipathy toward the subject of his successor. On 22 January 1971 he officially designated his 22-year old son Jean-Claude Duvalier as the next President-for-Life of Haiti and perpetuator of the "Duvalierist Revolution." Duvalier announced that he

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will train, guide, and prepare his son for his future role. The designation of Jean-Claude was greeted by generally effusive outpourings of approval from official Haiti and by "popular" demonstrations of affirmation. In less than 20 minutes, the legislature eliminated 17 constitutional obstacles to his succession. No overt dissatisfaction with the President's decision has been expressed. A popular referendum on 31 January to confirm Duvalier's decision completed the process of confirmation.

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Matters Affecting the Succession

6. Duvalier has proposed, but after his death others will dispose. The character of Jean-Claude, the attitude of the politically ambitious and personally powerful toward his prospective presidency, the manner in which the heir apparent will be prepared for and ultimately installed in office, and the length of time left to Duvalier to organize the succession are all relevant considerations.

7. Jean-Claude has usually been dismissed as a not-too-bright playboy. The character of a young and unformed man, particularly when he is the son of a formidable father, is hard to discern. The fragmentary impressions that have surfaced following his leap to prominence suggest that although he displays no special intellectual endowment, neither is he stupid. A new seriousness in his demeanor

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has been noted by some observers. His private feelings about the future his father has chosen for him are unknown. Max Dominique, the husband of Duvalier's ambitious and resourceful elder daughter Marie-Denise, told US Ambassador Knox recently that Jean-Claude is unenthusiastic about the presidency and might even try to evade it. Dominique has been mentioned as a presidential hopeful himself; he may have had reasons of his own for venturing this observation. Even with the required talents and a taste for the job, Jean-Claude would encounter formidable obstacles to the fulfillment of the destiny his father has chosen for him. Should he have no stomach for it, his tenure is unlikely to be lengthy, even if his father lives long enough to prepare the ground. The relationship between Jean-Claude and his sister Marie-Denise is unknown.

8. How long Duvalier has planned to arrange the succession in this way is not clear. Perhaps the cabinet changes in October 1970 were designed in part to weaken the power of well-entrenched, would-be aspirants to the presidency and to install new people who could be led to identify their future security with Jean-Claude. The same interpretation could be made of the changes Duvalier made in the military.

9. Desinor and Legislative Deputy Luckner Cambronne are the most persistently prominent names in the speculation on presidential aspirants. Both have amassed large personal fortunes during their long association with Duvalier. In the process, both undoubtedly have acquired friends who have profited financially from associating with them. These friends might easily convert to political adherents at a propitious moment. Both men are rumored to have organized clandestine political support for future eventualities.

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10. Adrien Raymond is Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. His brother, General Claude Raymond, is Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces. Their sister is private secretary to Madame Duvalier. The apparent power of the Raymond family would be intriguing were it not that its apparent potential must be perfectly obvious to Duvalier. He is old and ill, but he has shown no signs of having lost his touch. The Raymond threat would seem almost too conspicuous to be a real one.

11. A number of others have been mentioned as probable presidential aspirants, but Duvalier has so manipulated them over the years that no one man is believed to have managed to gain a significant advantage. Information on these people is sparse and contradictory. They have records of supporting Duvalier on certain occasions

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Several are alleged to hold Communist sympathies or to be Communists. All of them have an interest in personal aggrandizement, and--in part at least because of racial issues--all share a distaste for the United States.

12. The role of the military can be expected to change at least somewhat in the immediate post-Duvalier period. Duvalier's feat of strengthening the military while simultaneously keeping it under tight control is truly astounding. No Haitian president could obtain the office, let alone survive, without military support. The skill of Duvalier in creating and sustaining this equilibrium is probably not transferable, and the military may regain at least some degree of its former significance.

13. There is no evidence that serious plotting to overthrow Duvalier exists, or, should it develop, that it would succeed. But the mere fact that such adventures have been undertaken (the Coast Guard revolt of April 1970, for example), suggests that such a possibility can not be totally dismissed.

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Despite the allocation of a large percentage of the national budget to the armed forces, the Haitian defense establishment is still rather ramshackle. Luck has been on Duvalier's side in every attempt against him. In view of Duvalier's recent maneuvers to pave the way for his son to succeed him, plans for such an adventure might find a more receptive and more capable audience. Elements of the military, Communist, and non-Communist exile groups are the most likely to attempt such an endeavor.

14. Although rumors of exile invasion plans have already begun to circulate in the wake of the events of January, the exiles' capacity to seize power seems slight. That they may throw a monkey wrench into the succession mechanism Duvalier has contrived is a less remote possibility. But if this happens, the immediate winner is likely to be one of the establishment rather than an exile leader or some unknown hero.

The Outlook

15. Widespread chaos and an attendant power vacuum after Duvalier's departure from the scene are not anticipated, but if they should develop, every faction in Haiti and abroad would try to exploit the situation to its own advantage.

16. Duvalier has put his mark on Haiti, and successor regimes are likely to bear his stamp for a long time to come. Probably none of the possible successors would be able to run the custom-built Duvalier machine with the same expertise. Whether the succession is smooth or contested, the new incumbent can be expected to resort to typical Haitian repressive measures to assert himself and intimidate the opposition. As in the past, an elite would continue to divide the lion's share of money and power in return for keeping the chief executive in office. The apathetic and powerless

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majority would continue to play the customary role of innocent bystander and victim, gleaning a crumb here and there from the leavings of the mighty.

17. Barring a chaotic power struggle and assuming that the new president consolidates power quickly, the next administration may be somewhat less repressive, and modest economic development may continue. Ambivalence toward the United States is to be expected from any successor regime. Many Haitians resent the United States for what they consider its misjudgment of Duvalier's character, and they believe that US financial aid in the early years of Duvalier's administration helped him to consolidate power. Should a protracted and violent struggle for power develop, these resentments, which are particularly strong among the Haitian exiles, might come to the surface.

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